

- Attempt to Override President's Veto Fails -

- In A Weakening Economy, More Parents Struggling to Find Health Coverage for their Children -

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) today joined a majority of his colleagues to vote to support the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and override the President's veto of bipartisan legislation to provide health care to 10 million children. The House needed 290 votes to successfully override the President's veto, but the veto override failed by a vote of 260 yeas to 152 nays. Unfortunately, 151 House Republicans sided with President Bush to sustain the veto, and to keep from extending health coverage to 3.8 million children already eligible for health care under the program's rules.

"Today, House Republicans stood between 3.8 million additional children who would be covered by SCHIP under this bill and the health care they need," Hall said. "The President's veto last month denied health care to children of hardworking families across America just as the country began experiencing an economic downturn, with families increasingly struggling with the costs of heat, food, gas and health care."

More than 680,000 children in New York currently receive care through SCHIP, and the bipartisan plan vetoed by the President would have extended care to 268,000 more children in New York who are currently uninsured.

"When unemployment increases, so do the number of Americans without health insurance," said Congressman Hall. "In a weakening economy, more and more American parents are having difficulty finding health insurance for their children. As a result, the SCHIP program is more critical now than ever."

The legislation vetoed by the President provided a \$35 billion expansion of the SCHIP program and would have provided health care coverage to 10 million children. The legislation was backed by Republicans and Democrats in both houses of Congress and enjoyed support from Governors of both parties. Sixty-four Senators, including 17 Republican Senators, supported the legislation vetoed by President Bush.

The existing SCHIP program was extended in December until March 2009. However, without the legislation that Hall supports but President Bush successfully vetoed, 3.8 million additional low-income children who are eligible but not enrolled will now not be covered under the program. In addition, state budget shortfalls and administrative rules from President Bush put children who are covered now in jeopardy of losing health care.

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